



Identity Theft Risks Don't End at the Campus Gates

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MADISON – College life poses unique risks of identity theft for students, with tempting credit card offers, shared housing, and countless forms and information that must be provided. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection urges students to study up on ways to minimize the threat of identity theft.

“Identity theft can be incredibly damaging to young adults' credit and tax records, hindering their ability to secure student loans, buy a vehicle, or apply for a job,” said Frank Frassetto, Administrator for the Division of Trade and Consumer Protection. “Students may be unprepared to protect themselves from a steady stream of credit offers, constant requests for personally identifiable information on official forms, or a living situation where many people may be in and out of your room or apartment.”

Here are some helpful tips for students to minimize the risk of identity theft:

Don't:

- Carry your Social Security card in your wallet.
- Shop online or pay bills on a public computer, through an unsecured website, or on an unsecured Wi-Fi network.
- Give solicitors any personal financial information or your Social Security number.
- Post personal identifying information on social media.

Do:

- Keep your dorm room locked and keep sensitive materials out of sight, preferably in a lockbox.
- Request an assigned ID number instead if your school uses Social Security numbers for student ID.
- Ask that your Social Security number not be included on publicly posted grades.
- Shred pre-approved credit card offers and bills.
- Put mail directly in U.S. Postal Service mailboxes instead of unsecured campus mailboxes.

For additional information or to file a complaint, visit the Consumer Protection Bureau at datcp.wisconsin.gov, call the Consumer Information Hotline at 800-422-7128 or e-mail datcp hotline@wisconsin.gov.

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